

THE TRAINING OF THE TWELVE, PT. 1
LUKE 9:1-11

It's Christmas season. And there is a common question being asked these days: "Do we have enough?" E.g.,

- ✓ Do we have enough food?
- ✓ Do we have enough cookies?
- ✓ Do we have enough gifts?
- ✓ Do we have enough decorations (lights on the house, tinsel on the trees, etc.)?
- ✓ Do we have enough cash (to pay for everything)?
- ✓ Do we have enough time?

And the obvious answer to all these questions is an obvious, "No!" "We need more!" (like good Americans). A few days ago Raye Jeanne reviewed some of our Christmas gift purchases. She asked, "Is that enough?" "No" was my immediate reply. And then we talked about what more needed to be purchased.

There is a corollary question as we think about church and ministry — "do we have enough ____ (skill, endurance, wisdom, Bible, the Spirit) to do what God has called us to do?" And we are tempted to say, "No!" As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, we are aware of our inadequacy to preach the gospel to a dying world (2 Cor. 2:16)? But as Christ demonstrated to the disciples...

WHEN THE SON OF MAN SENDS HIS PEOPLE ON A MISSION, HE GIVES THEM WHAT THEY NEED FOR THAT MISSION.

As the title to my sermon indicates (and I borrowed it from A. B. Simpson), this passage is about Jesus training the Twelve (most of the chapter is about training). The disciples have been with Jesus for 1½ or two years and these are the first times that they are given tasks to do (Jesus is preparing them for His departure by giving them OJT). But even more, this chapter and this story is about the One who sends the Twelve on a mission; it's about the **nature and the character of the Sender**, the Son of Man, revealed in three ways...

1. The **MISSION** of the One Who Sends (vv. 1-6)
2. The **IDENTITY** of the One Who Sends (vv. 7-9)
3. The **RESULTS** for the One Who Sends (vv. 10-11)

1. The **MISSION** of the One Who Sends (vv. 1-6)

- The story starts and ends with an emphasis on Christ and His commissioning the disciples —
 - ✓ Jesus gathers **the Twelve** (v. 1; they don't gather themselves and ask Him) — **He gives** gifts, **He sends** them (v. 2), their ministry is perceived as His ministry (vv. 7-9), and at the end, they are led again by Him and He again is teaching and healing (vv. 10-11).
 - ✓ The Twelve are working in this section and we learn lessons about serving Christ and missions and evangelism; but these verses are much more about Christ and what He does in sending the Twelve.
- The disciples have been with Jesus as a group of **Twelve** prior to this, but this is the first time **they are given gifts** and responsibility. Jesus gave them two gifts:
 - ✓ **He gave them power** — this refers to the *ability* to heal and exorcise demons (first time for them).
 - ✓ He gave them **authority** — this refers to the *right* to heal and exorcise demons.
 - ✓ And notice He called the Twelve and **gave them** — these are not universal gifts for all believers; these are particular gifts for the Twelve as they began ministry and as they would found the church as apostles (Eph. 2:20).
 - ✓ For Jesus to give them His power and authority is also an implied reminder that their ministry is not only empowered by Him but *it is about Him*; they do not preach their message, but His message (v. 2). They are called to point people to the Messiah. They are inadequate and weak, yet the One they serve is infinitely adequate and omnipotently strong. They have His strength to carry out His purposes. [And that is still true today for those who are empowered by the Spirit of God; Eph. 4.]
- **The Twelve are also given a task** — **to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to perform healing** (v. 2).
 - ✓ Notice that **He sent them** — He is commissioning them as His official representatives for a task. (Just as their authority came from Him, for Him to send them means He had authority over them.)
 - ✓ What does it mean to **proclaim the Kingdom of God**? Simply it is to say, “Messiah is here (10:11).” “Repent and believe in Him for forgiveness of your sins (and He will establish the Kingdom).” Cf. 3:3, 8; 4:43; 7:22; 8:1. This message was important since they were sent to preach to lost sheep of Israel (Mt. 10:5-6) — it is one last kingdom offer to Galilee before Jesus leaves for Jerusalem (9:51).
 - ✓ When Jesus also told them **to perform healing** He was not just alleviating suffering, but He was giving them the confirmation of their message; the miracles attested to the truthfulness of the message they preached (7:22). Preaching was their priority (just as the gospel always is).
 - ✓ This the very thing that Christ did (4:18; 5:17; 6:17, 19; 8:46).
 - ✓ This would also be a repeated theme in coming chapters (10:16, 19-20, 22). Luke means us to understand that “What Jesus has done the disciples will do.” [Bock]
 - ✓ There is solidarity between Jesus and His disciples (they are not acting independently from Him).

- The Twelve are given urgency (vv. 3-5) —
 - ✓ Jesus tells them to **take nothing for your journey** (v. 3); they will not be gone long on their journey.
 - ✓ And, they weren't to take money as an indicator of whether people accepted or rejected their message; if it was accepted the people would provide for their needs.
 - ✓ They were to travel light — no (extra) **staff, bag, bread, nor money** (Mt. 10:9-10) They were to go with the clothes on their backs and *trusting that the Lord would provide for them* along the way.
 - ✓ They were to depend on the practice of Eastern hospitality — no hotels so they were dependent on the generosity of citizens of the cities to stay in **houses** (v. 4). That was a typical practice, but most itinerant religious philosophers would go from house to house to find the best location. In contrast, the disciples were to find a house and **stay there until they leave that city**.
 - ✓ They weren't to spend their time in pursuing personal comforts; they were to preach the Kingdom.
 - ✓ There is still a sense of urgency to preaching the gospel — we don't know if either we or those who need to hear will have further opportunities, and the longer they are in sin, the more they suffer...
- There is another indicator of urgency (v. 5) —
 - ✓ If they were not **received** in a city, they were to leave (**go out**) and **shake the dust off your feet**. When Jews would go to Gentile territory, they would shake the dust off their sandals to indicate they were removing the uncleanness of the Gentiles and breaking ties with the Gentiles.
 - ✓ It is a sign of "good riddance" (maybe a fan burning a jersey of a former beloved player). And as they say "good-bye" to that city, they are also prioritizing preaching to those who are willing to hear; there is only so much time and opportunity to declare the message of Christ; don't waste it.
 - ✓ It's a reminder to the Twelve that some will reject Christ (they should not be discouraged).
 - ✓ But it is also a sign of *judgment* — it is a warning that if they don't change they will experience the judgment of God (10:11-12, 15).
 - ✓ [If you no longer "hear" or have the gospel preached to you it may be a sign of God's judgment — Is. 6:9-11; Mt. 7:6; Rom. 1:24-32.] If you do not believe, repent and believe for forgiveness...
- And what Jesus compelled the disciples to do, they did (v. 6) — **preaching and healing everywhere...**
 - ✓ They went in six pairs (Mk. 6:7) throughout Galilee — now a third circuit of Galilee.
 - ✓ [Aside: Judas also went out with the Twelve, evidently also preaching and healing; he is a warning that it is possible to do religious things and not be a believer, Mt. 7:21-23.]
 - ✓ So the Twelve are equipped by Christ for their first task for Him. And He removes all their "crutches" of provision (including His presence). How will they do? Will they have enough? Did Christ give them enough? Were they able? (Yes!)
- While this was a particular task for the Twelve, *we have a similar commission* — Mt. 28:18-20; Col. 1:18, 28-29. "Preach any Christ but a crucified Christ and you will not reach men for long." Start w. gospel...

2. The **IDENTITY** of the One Who Sends (vv. 7-9)

- We've said that this passage is primarily about Jesus, even though the Twelve are the ones who are preaching and healing on this tour of Galilee; and the response indicates it is about Jesus...
 - ✓ **Herod...heard of all that was happening...** News of the preaching and healing of the Twelve gets to the palace and Herod is **perplexed** (v. 7) — he can't figure out this puzzle.
 - ✓ Some said **John** (the Baptist) **had risen from the dead** (v. 7); others said **Elijah...and others one of the prophets...** He hears a report of the Twelve, and attributes it to the One (Jesus). He recognizes that Jesus is behind these events; it's not about the sent ones; it's about the Sender.
 - ✓ As an aside, remember who **Herod** (family name) was — this is one of the sons of Herod the Great (Mt. 2:3ff); when Herod the Great died, his kingdom was divided between four sons and this Herod was *Antipas*, and he ruled over Galilee from about 4 B.C. until 39 A.D. He was evil (Jesus calls him a "fox," 13:31-32) who stole his brother's wife, Herodias. That illicit relationship was condemned by John and John was ultimately **beheaded** by Herod (v. 9) because Herodias was so incensed by John.
 - ✓ That Herod thinks Jesus might be John has the sense of "Oh no, here we go again..."
- The key phrase in these verses is in v. 9 — **who is this man?** He is unconcerned about the Twelve; he is concerned about the authority behind the Twelve (Christ).
 - ✓ This is not the only time this question has been asked. Ironically, John's disciples had asked the question for John (7:19-20). And Jesus' own disciples had also asked the question (8:25). And shortly Jesus would also ask the question of the Twelve (vv. 18, 20).
 - ✓ This repeated question emphasizes that the identity of Christ is of paramount importance. This question is the theme of the opening section of this chapter, and the conclusion of Jesus' Galilean ministry (v. 20). There is no greater question to answer in all of life. And everyone must answer the question — from the poorest peasant in Galilee to the governor of Galilee. All must answer.
 - ✓ How do you answer this question? Life both now and eternity is determined by how you answer.
 - ✓ [And realize Herod's answer was wrong — he **kept trying to see Jesus**, but for ungodly reasons: here he is perplexed; in 13:31 he is hostile and angry; in 23:8-11 he is mocking and then apathetic.]
 - ✓ In school, you want to answer questions correctly, but the consequences aren't usually too dramatic if you get the answer wrong (I survived hundreds of wrong answers). This answer has eternal consequences.
 - ✓ *What's the answer?* Most answer incorrectly, but three answer correctly: the Roman centurion (Mk. 15:39), Thomas (Jn. 20:28), and Peter (Lk. 9:20). He is the Son of God, the Son of Man, the Savior of the world, and the Lord of all. And He is worth believing...
 - ✓ The 18th century essayist, Charles Lamb explained well who this man is: "If William Shakespeare were to come into a room, men would stand up out of respect for his accomplishments. But if Jesus Christ were to come into the room, the only appropriate response would be to kneel."
 - ✓ We go to serve Christ for the same reason that the disciples did: the Son of Man has sent us...

3. The **RESULTS** for the One Who Sends (vv. 10-11)

- We don't know how long the disciples were gone — enough time that they each were able to go to multiple cities and villages and the responses were clear.
 - ✓ **Returning** to Jesus, they **gave an account to Him**. They are sent by Him, they come back to Him, and they report to Him. The story is all about Him and His authority.
 - ✓ Interestingly, none of the gospel writers say what the report was; Mark only says that they were tired (Mk. 6:31a) and Mark (6:31b) and Luke (v. 11) both note that crowds still follow Jesus.
 - ✓ But notice that here that Luke also calls them **Apostles** (only once previously, 6:13). They were apostles in that they were “sent” by Christ (v. 2), but here they also carry the title, anticipating their ultimate role in building the church of Christ.
- Having received the report, Jesus takes them to **Bethsaida** — evidently by the sea shore (Mk. 6:32); it is possible that they moved inland from the shore and were in the “region” of Bethsaida.
 - ✓ It was **probably a small town** on the other side of the Jordan River (trans-Jordan), outside of Herod's territory.
 - ✓ What is especially notable about Bethsaida is that it was singled out for judgment because of its unbelief (**10:13-14**). Despite all they saw and heard about Jesus, they rejected Him.
 - ✓ Yet despite the final rejection, Jesus saw their need and He resumed His ministry of **speaking about the Kingdom...and curing...** He was doing what He always did and what He called the Twelve to do.
- **What are the results** of the ministry of the Twelve?
 - ✓ **They are trained in ministry** responsibilities (their first attempt is what they would do for life).
 - ✓ **They are trained in obedience** — they did what Christ called them to do (even to exhaustion).
 - ✓ **They are trained to depend** on the sufficiency of Christ. He sent them out with little. And it was enough for them. And it will be enough for us as well.
 - ✓ “God does not use preachers because they help him in the conversion of souls;...God would have us know, that it is not the parts or piety of the preacher, but his grace and Spirit that dos the work; they are nothing, he is all in all.” [Swinnock, *The Incomparableness of God*]

CONCLUSION: [Helen Roseveare](#) was a single missionary in the Congo (50s–70s) who suffered much for Christ: she was arrested for her faith, imprisoned, beaten, and brutally raped. In the days that followed, she was tempted to believe that God had failed her. Yet as she meditated on Scripture and prayed, she said,

Through the brutal heartbreaking experience of rape, God met with me—with outstretched arms of love. It was an unbelievable experience: He was so utterly there, so totally understanding, his comfort was so complete—and suddenly I knew—I really knew that his love was unutterably sufficient. He did love me! He did understand!...

I knew that Philippians 4:19, “My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus,” was true on all levels, not just on a hyper-spiritual shelf where I had tried to relegate it....He was actually offering me the inestimable privilege of sharing in some little way in the fellowship of His sufferings.

And finally, this:

“There is a wonderful truth that God has enough to supply all our needs. Enough for salvation, enough for forgiveness, enough to overcome temptations, enough to persevere in adversities, enough to calm our fears and anxieties. Enough grace, enough love, enough power...This is summed up in the promise: ‘My grace is sufficient for you’ (2 Cor. 12:9). That is to say, it is enough.”

Jesus sent the Twelve out on a mission with the barest of provisions. Would He be enough for them? Indeed He was. Wherever He sends you to serve Him, will He be enough for you? In a remote village in Indonesia? In downtown FW? In a job surrounded by ungodly co-workers? In a counseling room with someone whose problems are unfathomable to you? When asked to disciple someone and you’ve never done it before? When your neighbor needs to hear the gospel? When your parent, child, or sibling persists in rejecting the gospel and turns hostile? When...?

Will he be enough? Yes. He will.

BENEDICTION: Romans 16:25-27